



24th UNITED STATES – MEXICO BORDER GOVERNORS CONFERENCE

**AUGUST 24-25, 2006
AUSTIN, TEXAS**

JOINT DECLARATION

PREAMBLE

The Governors of the states of Baja California, Chihuahua, Coahuila, Nuevo León, Sonora and Tamaulipas of the United Mexican States, and the Governors of the states of Arizona, California, New Mexico and Texas of the United States of America, meeting in the city of Austin, Texas on August 24 and 25, 2006, having analyzed, during the XXIII Conference of the United States-Mexico Border Governors, the topics related to Agriculture, Border Crossings, Economic Development, Education, Energy, Environment, Health, Science and Technology, Security and Tourism, Water, and Wildlife; and

WHEREAS

The United States of America and the United Mexican States are two sovereign and independent nations, each with its own clear identity;

These sovereign nations share a border of nearly two thousand miles, as well as common values and a vision for the prosperity of the border region;

The United States-Mexico border region is one of the most dynamic regions of the world, where the border is not a line that divides our countries but a bond that unites us and invites us to work together for mutual benefit;

Current international conditions have magnified the strategic role of the border region and compelled us to cooperate more than ever with both federal governments to ensure greater security and efficiency on the border;

The border states recognize that the positive impact on the economy and global competitiveness of the region will be defined by the development of joint strategies to enhance competitiveness through the development of human capital and construction of scientific and technological capacity;

The ten states comprising the United States-Mexico border region have collaborated through the institution of the Border Governors Conference for over two decades;



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The border states, united as never before by common interests and open dialogue, are determined to seize this opportunity to achieve unprecedented bilateral cooperation;

The border states reiterate their commitment to open economies and social advancement for the benefit of the inhabitants of the region;

The frequent work meetings held between the governments of the border states have made it possible to establish a mechanism for ongoing dialogue and consultation, as well as a close working relationship among the border Governors;

The relationship among the border governors continues to generate cooperation between the states, for the prosperity and improvement of the quality of life for the inhabitants of the region;

We, the border governors, endorse this Joint Declaration and hereby adopt the following topics of significant importance toward the development of the border region:

AGRICULTURE AND LIVESTOCK

Review the evaluation of the Binational Agroterrorism Workshop and determine the top three issues in need of coordination. Take appropriate steps to increase coordination and communication to the extent possible.

Continue to develop the Nutrition Working Group as an outlet to share ideas, accomplish goals and improve current systems. Invite the Education Work Table and the Health Work Table to participate in a Nutrition Task Force.

Gather information about the current standards for animal and plant health and food safety operating in the border states. Best standards can then be identified and eventually established to harmonize systems through all ports of entry.

Prioritize access for live cattle-trade with Mexico.

BORDER CROSSINGS

Designate funding, adopt a border-wide schedule and accelerate SENTRI and FAST lane projects. Adopt “A New Vision for Trade Along the U.S. - Mexico



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Border” from the Border Legislative Conference. (Shared recommendation with Environment.)

Request that the U.S. Department of State clarify the applicability of Executive Order 13337 regarding the necessity of Presidential permits for projects at existing land ports of entry and allow the Border Governors Conference to serve as “reviewing agency” for policy issues related to transportation at international border crossings.

Request that U.S. and Mexico’s federal, state, regional and local agencies coordinate with the U.S.-Mexico Joint Working Committee and the U.S.-Mexico Border Crossings Working Group, to launch a pilot program to improve long planning and funding coordination processes relative to capital improvements for new and existing international border crossings.

Request the U.S. Department of State to provide the necessary and reasonable means for the proper identification of U.S. citizens returning by land into the U.S. and consider the issue of minimizing the economic impact on border economies resulting from the implementation of the Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative. (Shared recommendation with Tourism and Economic Development.)

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Promote and hold the 2nd Binational Border Business and Industrial Cluster Forum for the Automotive, Information Technology, Aerospace, and Renewable Energy Industries.

Promote and hold a Regional Supply Chain Development Forum/Workshop. The objective is to educate and assist small to medium sized companies in the region on how to sell their products to the different industries and their respective T1 – T2 suppliers along the border.

Promote the adoption of the Binational Economic Development Certification program by border-states’ universities in order to graduate economic developers specialized in identifying, creating and improving long term commercial ties and business opportunities between Mexico and the US.

EDUCATION

Support the continuance of Mexican federal funding of English as a second language program for the growth of these programs in the elementary schools of the Mexican border states, while the border states of the United States of America continue to support this effort through the sharing of promising practices and professional development of Mexican teachers engaged in this effort. The



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border states of the United States of America will continue to work to enhance English language instruction for students with limited English proficiency, to the extent permitted by law in each respective state.

Suggest that the border governors create and manage a single official website to promote, communicate and memorialize the varied activities and accomplishments of the Border Governors Conferences, Commissions and Work Tables.

Strengthen existing and develop new exchange programs among the border states in Mexico and the United States of America to improve student academic, linguistic, health, cultural, social, and emotional success.

ENERGY

Update energy border infrastructure information continuously for each of the states. Develop an index of state and federal regulations for granting of permissions and licenses for energy projects in both sides of the border. Update periodically the requests of future needs of energy in the frontier region.

Prepare an index to identify potential high-consuming industries for energy audits. Estimate the potential savings to be realized by improving energy efficiencies in these large industrial consumers. Identify those industries having most potential of energy savings.

Intensify promotion and development of renewable energy projects. Act as a link for the implementation of financing programs across international institutions that support the renewable energy projects and promote savings and efficient use of energy in large industrial consumers.

Create perspectives on cross-border trade of electricity, including barriers and limitations and on cross-border commercialization of natural gas and prices.

Recently the Senate of Mexico granted permission to the proprietary concessionaires of coal mines, for the recovery and use of grisú gas, associated with the cloaks of mineral coal.

ENVIRONMENT

Identify the needs of each community in the U.S-Mexico border region to support continuous monitoring of particulate matter, and make a request to the EPA to consider the synergistic effect of emission sources on airsheds in its proposed rule amendments to the National Ambient Air Quality Standards for Particulate Matter published in the Federal Register on January 17, 2006. These



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communities are typically comprised of smaller populations and industrial sources on the U.S. side, whereas on the Mexican side they are large metropolitan cities and

industrial sources. Request that the EPA continue to support air quality monitoring programs in the border region.

Congratulate the combined BECC-NADBank board, and look forward to having both institutions reach maturity and implement recent changes to their charter as they continue to certify and fund environmental infrastructure projects for the benefit of border state residents. Request these institutions to define mechanisms of coordination with the environmental board of the Border Governors Conference to allow the improvement of the performance of their actions in a local level.

Applaud the leadership of SEMARNAT that resulted in regulations for the mandatory use of Ultra-Low Sulfur Diesel in Mexico. The Border Governors Conference expects the 2007 deadline for having this new fuel available in the Border States to be met in a timely manner. Recognize and support the Border Legislative Conference's new proposal entitled "A New Vision for Trade along the U.S.-Mexico Border", specifically its goal on promoting retrofitting commercial-vehicle engines with innovative technologies such as natural gas systems. However, due to the increased wait times and traffic at border ports and the direct impact on air quality for the border communities, we urge both federal governments to assess such impacts and the appropriate measures that could be taken to protect human health and the environment.

HEALTH

Expand the four existing Technical Work Groups of the Health Work Table to include Planning for Pandemic Influenza and coordinate with federal officials to develop mutual assistance and cooperation protocols to prevent, protect, and respond to cross-border threats.

Request the United States Department of Health and Human Services and Mexico Ministry of Health to:

- Include the border states in binational preparedness planning for pandemic influenza, in coordination with the United States, Mexico, and Canada federal Security and Prosperity Partnership (SPP);
- Provide dedicated funding to the United States-Mexico border region for public health emergency, preparedness and response;
- Provide flexibility in the utilization of this funding according to identified risk-based needs, and the ability to use funds over multiple years; and



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- Require binational, state-to-state collaboration in developing and implementing joint annual work plans for public health emergency preparedness and response.

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Assess the border states current science and technology capacity, global competitiveness, industry needs, and common infrastructures. These assessments will form the basis of a border region science and technology marketing plan and determine areas for focused investment from state resources and private capital to facilitate economic growth in the region. Existing organizations and resources such as the Binational Sustainability Laboratory (BNSL), the United States-Mexico Foundation for Science (FUMEC), and others, should be utilized throughout this process.

Establish Border Angel Investment Networks. These networks will improve the likelihood of attracting later stage capital once the companies have reached the point of being ready to go to market with their products or services.

SECURITY

Work further on the creation of a Virtual Private Network (VPN) system that would allow for the participating states to enter specific criminal information relating to investigations of Auto Theft, Criminal Gangs, Fugitives, Missing Persons, Drug Traffickers, Terrorists and Human Smugglers.

Create a sub-committee to address these issues. The goal of the sub-committee shall be to recommend to the Worktable training procedures, protocols for the exchange of equipment, and operating protocols to combat these emergencies.

Continue to address training issues and participating states will continue to provide curriculum and instructors in those areas that are vital to law enforcement and public safety.

TOURISM

Share best practices to develop and promote binational tourism activities and strengthen collaborative tourism projects between neighboring border states. Explore and maximize synergistic promotional opportunities between neighboring border states in order to launch binational tourism initiatives whenever possible. Assess market potential of shared tourism assets in neighboring USA/Mexico states by analyzing historical ties, feeder-markets & ad hoc tours.



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Request an in-depth evaluation of the Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative (WHTI). Analyze, in depth, the ramifications of WHTI and its effects on the dynamics of the border region. Determine the feasibility of conducting a formal study to assess the net impact of WHTI on tourism flow, economic stimuli, public perception of the border region, as well as potential obstacles in the ability to carry out the initiative.

Develop a comprehensive research program to obtain border region data. Work with research experts to formalize an agreement to obtain and synthesize information having to do with tourism on the border region. Specify deliverables to be provided by research experts in order to disseminate border region data to interested stakeholders in a useful, applicable format.

WATER

Develop a conservation demonstration project of border surface waters (Rio Grande) that would make them available for beneficial use by current existing water-rights holders.

Request the Border Environment Cooperation Commission and the North American Development Bank to implement actions to reduce the length of time taken to develop and approve financing of projects and take related actions that would allow them to return to their desired functions – those of promoting and financing infrastructure along the US-Mexico border.

Commend the International Boundary and Water Commission, United States and Mexico, for hosting a successful November 2005 Rio Grande/Río Bravo Water Summit and encourage publication of the proceedings and resolutions from the Summit.

WILDLIFE

Ensure the commitment of a U.S. legislator to introduce the Borderlands Wildlife and Wildlife Habitat Conservation bill into Congress. All US-Mexico border states have concurred that this is the top priority for the Wildlife Work Table. Each state will contact their respective governor to inform him/her about the purpose and progress made regarding this bill.

Establish priority conservation actions for key shared species of flora and fauna along the U.S.-Mexico border and identify, bilaterally, state and regional species that are endemic, of conservation priority, invasive, or of special interest. Identify areas of special interest. Establish guidelines for the implementation of short, medium, and long-term conservation actions for selected species. Strengthen national and international cooperation through training, information exchange and



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technology transfer. Allocate human and financial resources for conservation of selected species.

Identify funding sources and apply for funds in support of technological exchange and transfer activities as well as training in the areas of wildlife survey

techniques, ecosystems management, design/implementation of databases and information systems, and law enforcement.

SPECIAL RECOMMENDATIONS

Request study and consideration, by all government representatives of the border states, for the creation of a Technical Secretariat or a Unit for Follow-up and Evaluation to the action items derived from the recommendations of each of the work tables. This is related to the proposal presented by the State of California with a few modifications.

Create a recommendation and grant it “urgent” status, so that the Economic Development, Tourism and Border Crossings work tables (which are the work tables with more issues at stake) can work together to assess and analyze the impact of the U.S. government initiative that specifies that all U.S. citizens entering the country must present a passport as the only official means of identification as of December 31, 2007. These work tables shall present the results of their joint work at the next Border Governors Conference.

During the Joint Declaration analysis phase, Governor Bours from Sonora will request all governors to support the consolidation of the North American Development Bank as an institution that truly promotes regional development, and to turn it into an instrument that brings financial feasibility to the projects of the northern border in the short, medium and long range.

The Governor of the State of Nuevo León, José N. González Parás, will propose to his counterparts at the Border Governors Conference, the creation of a Logistics work table, in order to increase competitiveness in the region through the studying of strategies, adopting measures and doing projects related to cargo transportation, railroads, airports, seaports, multimodal infrastructure, customs, and any other aspects aiming to improve cargo timing and movement.